



## ***South Carolina Department of Agriculture*** **Hugh E. Weathers, Commissioner**

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### **SC Department of Agriculture Awarded \$3.5 Million Grant to Implement Food Safety Modernization Act**

**COLUMBIA, S.C.-** The South Carolina Department of Agriculture was recently awarded a \$3.5 million grant from the Food and Drug Administration to implement the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule in South Carolina. FSMA aims to ensure the U.S. food supply is safe by shifting the focus of federal regulators from responding to contamination to preventing it.

The funds, awarded over five years, will help strengthen partnerships in the food safety industry while creating a comprehensive, coordinated system that will support the efforts of a nationally integrated food safety system. The program will also encourage the safe production of fresh fruits and vegetables. FSMA affects more than 5000 farmers in South Carolina who grow peaches, melons, berries, cucumbers, squash, tomatoes, kale, broccoli and spinach.

SCDA Consumer Protection Division will be responsible for stakeholder communications, educational outreach, audit assistance, enforcement support and the development of a “SC Farm Inventory.” Consumer Protection will also ensure that farmers are compliant ready.

Clemson University is a partner in the process and will help in developing a produce safety training plan. Thirty-eight extension agents will assist the SCDA team in disseminating information to growers statewide. SCDA will coordinate with other stakeholders such as South Carolina Farm Bureau and Carolina Farm Stewardship Association to develop outreach, policy, and strategies to assist farmers and others affected by this new legislation.

For more information about FSMA, visit [agriculture.sc.gov](http://agriculture.sc.gov).

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